

the Senate who sit before me here when I mentioned that word "spring."

In West Virginia, the center of the world—half the world on one side, half the world on the other—West Virginia, early daffodils pushed through great rafts of dried leaves washed up against old stone farmhouse foundations that jut like rocky reefs out of sunny hill-sides. Oh, the iridescent sunsets and the viridescent hills that are West Virginia's. Bluebirds decorated telephone line perches while forsythia blossoms announced the awakening of the Earth.

Then the March lion roared with a vengeance, sending successive storm waves across the Nation. Snow buried the daffodils under a crystalline blanket of sparkling white. West Virginia was hit hard by these late storms, as were many other States. What was a boon for skiers and schoolchildren has been a real hardship for commerce and commuters.

But now, as the vernal equinox and the official first day of spring approaches, we can all look forward to the lion at last lying down with the lamb. It is time, as the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909), wrote in "Atlanta in Calydon":

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

Once again, the warm sun encourages us to consider folding away our scarves, our gloves, and our overcoats, retiring the snow shovel to the shed, and pulling out instead the trowel and the seed packets.

How many of us have enjoyed looking at those seed packets and fancying ourselves as young farmers, how we would grow these cucumbers, or these tomatoes, or this lettuce, or these onions, or the potatoes?

What promise is contained in seed packets! What a joy. Reading garden catalogs during cold, dark winter days inspires small-scale gardeners like myself with dreams of grandeur. Ah, fancy myself growing these beautiful vegetables. Ah, I am sure that others have shared that pleasantries with me many times. A few tomato plants are all that I really have the time for, but for me those humble plants with the spicy scent, their soft leaves and glossy fruits—Better Boy, Big Boy, Beefsteak, Early Girl—a few tomato plants are all that I really have the time for, but for me, those humble plants with their spicy scent, their soft leaves and glossy fruits, serve each year to reconnect me with cycles of nature. In my few tomato plants, I share with farmers throughout the Nation worries about cold spells, early frosts, drought, excessive rainfall, fungus, and insect infestation. But, like those farmers throughout the Nation, I glory in the success of my efforts, and my family and neighbors—mostly my family—share in the bounties of those tomato plants.

How can one even dare to believe that there is no God, no Creator? Why do I put those tomato plants in the ground? Why? I have confidence that the Creator of man and the universe is going to make those tomato plants bear some fruit.

And this year I will delight in introducing the newest member of my family, too—I say to our distinguished leader, a new member of my family—a dainty great-granddaughter, Caroline Byrd Fatemi; wait until I introduce her to my garden. She was born just 2 weeks ago yesterday. So small and precious now, she will grow strong and happy in the sunshine. And perhaps someday she too will grow some tomatoes.

I do love the promise of the spring.

William Jennings Bryan spoke of the Father, the Creator:

If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and to make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the Earth the soul of man made in the image of his Creator?

If He stoops to give to the rosebush whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He refuse the words of hope to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come?

I do love the promise of the spring. Every place is better for springtime's artistry. There exists no imposing monument of granite or marble that is not improved by a softening verdigris of springtime green, highlighted by bright blooms. Washington is at its best in April and May, under bright skies and tossing cherry blossoms, with all of its governmental mass leavened by leaves. Spring travels a little slower to the hillsides of West Virginia, but it is, perhaps, all the more cherished for blooming later. There, in the deep shadows of the hills where rhododendron thickets outline quiet chapels among the cathedral of the trees, greening springtime coincides in harmony with God's Easter promise of resurrection.

I encourage my colleagues, and everyone else, too, to shake off the last of the winter blahs and go outside. Go early in the morning when the birds sing in grand chorus, or in the blinding brightness of noon, or in the lilac serenity of evening, but go outside. Go outside and breathe in the scent of hyacinths and fresh-turned earth. Plant a garden. Plant a single tomato seedling and join in the great community of gardeners and farmers and lovers of the earth. But do enjoy the springtime. It resurrects the spirit.

I asked the Robin as he sprang
From branch to branch and sweetly sang
What made his breast so round and red
"Twas looking at the sun," he said.

And I asked the violets sweet and blue,
Sparkling in the morning dew,
Whence came their colors, then so shy,
They answered, "Looking to the sky."

I saw the roses one by one
Unfold their petals to the sun.

I asked them what made their tints so bright,

And they answered, "Looking toward the light."

I asked the thrush whose silvery note
Came like a song from angel's throat,
Why he sang in the twilight dim.
He answered, "Looking up at Him."

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CLELAND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, will the Senator from Georgia allow me a brief action before he makes his statement, dealing with the schedule?

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I gladly yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi, the majority leader, is recognized.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SENATOR BYRD ON THE BIRTH OF HIS GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to express my happiness and congratulations to the distinguished Senator from West Virginia on the birth of his great granddaughter. One of the most memorable experiences I had in my life in the Senate was his beautiful and eloquent statement on the floor in recognition of June 20, 1998, the date of the birth of that fine young American, my grandson, Chester Trent Lott, III. So I know how much it means to Senator BYRD as his family continues to grow and expand, and what a lovely gift it is to have that great grandchild. I thank Senator BYRD for making us all aware of this. I am sorry my eloquence could never rise to the level of his on the birth of my grandson. But I will continue to work on that, I should say to Senator BYRD.

THE SMILING MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, I don't know about eloquence, but I can say that the Senator from Mississippi always carries a warm smile. I have not been noted for smiling. I once read a story by Nathaniel Hawthorne entitled, "The Great Stone Face." And so I usually think of myself, in the context of that story, as the great stone face. But the distinguished Senator from Mississippi is always bubbling with energy, always on the move, always wearing a smile, always with twinkling eyes. He brings a lift to the spirits of all of us. I congratulate him. I know that grandchild of his is always going to carry the picture in his little mind of that grandfather with that sparkling, radiant smile.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Senator.

CONSULTATION WITH CONGRESS ON KOSOVO

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, Senator BYRD and I, as a matter of fact, just came from an extended meeting with the President of the United States, where the joy of our grandchildren and great grandchildren was also uppermost in our minds, because we are